

CRICKET WOMAN MOTHER EARTH

by  
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### Times

The Infestation...	June 2010
A Polite Discussion...	A few days later
An Open Door...	And later still
Illumination...	That night
The Morning After...	The next morning
-Act Break-	
Soundbites...	A bar, 8 months later (or February)
A Nasty Comeuppance...	That night

### Places

The Bloom home  
A bar

### People

Aura Bloom...	30's, a woman
Billy Bloom...	30's, her husband
Phillip...	30's, Billy's friend
Steve Valerio...	A Census Taker

Newscaster(s)... Pre-filmed or done via real video footage and voice over. Preference should be given to a female voice if available.

*(the actor playing Steve should double as the bartender in Soundbites OR that scene can be played without the bartender at all)*

### Authors Notes

*For the first act of this play, actual news coverage about the Gulf and the planet at large should be used. It is only in the second act where news events become imagined that scripted news reports should be used. If (of course) as time goes by more suitable (and dare I hope not) more tragic events unfold, then the use of actual coverage in the second act would of course be once more practical.*

*This play deals with a feeling of global responsibility. It is not the intention of the playwright that the issues in this play are strictly anglo-concerns and as such, the race of all roles with the exception of Steve (who is Mexican American) are up for grabs.*

THE INFESTATION

*A house.*

*With a yard.*

*And a porch.*

*It's a little too late in the evening to tell much about the owner's decorating habits however, for the night hides everything in the dark.*

*Cricket*

*Cricket-Cricket*

*Thump*

*Cricket*

*Aura Bloom bursts from the bedroom, hot pink earmuffs strapped to her head and bathrobe pulled tight.*

Motherfucker!

AURA

*She narrows her eyes, searching...*

Where are you...

AURA (CONT'D)

*Aura lifts the muffs just enough to zone in on the offender...*

*Silence.*

*Silence.*

*Cricket*

*Aura jumps and spins... she chirps back.*

Prick.

AURA (CONT'D)

*Cricket*

Prick.

AURA (CONT'D)

*Cricket*

*Aura flips a switch, introducing light to the house.*

*It is nicely decorated - its owners neither rich, nor starving... nor particularly tidy.*

... Prick  
AURA (CONT'D)

*... Cricket*

*It's under the washing machine!*

Fucker!  
AURA (CONT'D)

*Aura searches the cupboards above the machine... She pulls out a can of compressed air.*

*She points it under the machine and shooooooooots!*

*Dust flies in all directions.*

*Aura coughs, waves, listens...*

*Cricket.*

*Aura thumps the machine, gets up and stomps her way to the hall closet, rummaging until finally:*

*A golf club!*

*Aura slides the golf club under and between the machines... all she gets for her troubles are wads of lint, a few pens, and some spare change.*

*Cricket*

Oh, come ON!  
AURA (CONT'D)  
(wailing)

*She lets the nooks and crannies have it again...*

*Cricket.*

*Aura springs to her feet and marches into the kitchen, reaching into the cupboard and pulling out a flashlight.*

*The batteries are dead.*

*She shakes it.*

*No dice.*

*Aura pulls out a long lighter - the kind you use to light the grill - and tests it.*

*It works!*

*Aura runs back to the washing machine: if anyone has ever tried looking beneath a washing machine with a lighter, they will know that it's wildly unsuccessful.*

*The lighter goes sliding across the floor in defeat as Aura jams her golf club under the machine one last time.*

*She lets out an Amazonian wail.*

*Then she holds her breath...*

*Silence.*

*Aura rests her head on the floor in relief - whimpery, five-year-old-who-hasn't-slept-in-days kind of relief.*

*She uses the golf club to turn off the light...*

*She takes off the earmuffs.*

*She pulls a towel from the laundry bin and crumples it beneath her head.*

*Aura...*

*is*

*(finally)*

*going...*

*to...*

*CRICKET*

AURA (CONT'D)

Goddamn it, you cock-sucking motherfucker! GET OUT OF MY HOUSE!

*Aura launches to her feet.*

*She's crying, she's so goddamn tired!*

*The kitchen... Aura yanks the largest knife from its block and heads back to the washing machine.*

*She yanks and pulls, pulls and yanks, until the machine is cockeyed and the floor beneath it visible.*

*Her eyes light up; there he is, the insensitive prick.*

AURA (CONT'D)

Ha-Ha!

*Aura crouches, raises the knife above and... freezes?*

*She can't do it... his beady little cricket eyes are staring back at her, looking into her...*

AURA (CONT'D)

Fuckshitassbastard....

*Billy, finally Billy, stumbles out of their bedroom to see if his wife is ever coming back to bed.*

*He heads to the kitchen first, though; he's thirsty.*

BILLY

Honey?

AURA

It won't shut up!

BILLY

What have you done to the kitchen?

AURA

I hate those goddamn pills you take, can't you see I'm at war?

BILLY

It's so late...

AURA

And they make your breathe stink.

BILLY

I have a disorder and you hate the medication that makes it possible for me to sleep?

AURA

Can't you hear it?

BILLY

(the kitchen)

Everything is cockeyed...

AURA

Shhhhh.

*He takes a drink*

BILLY

God that tastes good.

AURA

Shhhhhhhhhhhut up!

*Billy rubs his eyes.*

BILLY

Am I still dreaming?

*Aura is crying over this stupid cricket and Billy's standing there rubbing his eyes?*

AURA

God... help me, Billy, I'm having a goddamn dramatic moment here!

BILLY

Aura, honey, you should come back to bed- take one of my pills if you want. Take a half of one -

AURA

I can't, I can't just take a- Not with it in the house.

*Billy flips on the light...*

BILLY

Jesus Aura, that's a big ass knife!

AURA

Thank you CAPTAIN OBVIOUS!

BILLY

Sweetie, I really think you need to come back to bed.

AURA

Some of us can't just tune out the world like you do.

BILLY

You're over-tired-

AURA

NO SHIT!

BILLY

Did I forget to take out the trash or something?

AURA

What?

BILLY

I don't understand why you're *yelling*.

*Cricket*

*Billy leans down.*

BILLY (CONT'D)

Oh, hey there little guy!

(to Aura)

Is that what's got you upset? Let me get a plastic cup or something to scoop him up.

AURA

*A plastic cup?*

BILLY

You think I should use the china?

AURA

What the- Fuck! This is not... This is more than... He's torturing me. He has intent. There must be comeuppance-

BILLY

Nah, look, we'll just scoop him up - he just wants to be outside with his buddies, isn't that right little fella?. He's lonely is all. See?

*Billy steps closer, but Aura raises the knife.*

AURA  
You're not listening to me!

BILLY  
Aura, of course I'm listening to you. You're just not making any sense.

*Aura raises the knife higher, readying herself to attack.*

*Billy thinks he will be able to circumnavigate the knife.*

*(We can all see where this is going...)*

AURA  
Get out of the way-

BILLY  
Aura-

AURA  
Say your prayers, fuck-wad.

BILLY  
Me? Or the cricket?

*To the cricket, obviously! She is ALL about this cricket!*

AURA  
Stop looking at me like that. I JUST WANT SOME PEACE AND QUIET AROUND HERE!

BILLY  
Aura, I SAID YOU COULD HAVE A HALF OF ONE OF MY PILLS!

*Billy tries to take the knife away from Aura, but the knife hits Billy square in the brow.*

*All three of them are surprised.*

BILLY (CONT'D)  
Jesus Christ! You cut me!

AURA  
Oh my God, are you alright?

BILLY  
I'm bleeding.

AURA  
No shit you're bleeding.

BILLY  
It *hurts!*

AURA  
You don't need to say it like that!

BILLY  
But it does! Put the knife down.

AURA  
Stop telling me what to do-

BILLY  
You're like Goddamn Billy Kruger with that thing!

AURA  
It's *Freddy Kruger*, you idiot-

BILLY  
Same difference-

*Cricket*

AURA  
I said SHUT UP!

*Aura lands the knife down with a  
THWACK.*

*Right where her other hand sits.*

BILLY  
Oh my God.

*Aura lifts up her hand in shock -  
her thumb is gone.*

AURA  
Motherfucker.

*Billy drops to the ground in a  
faint.*

*Cricket*

*Dark.*

## A POLITE DISCUSSION

*A few days later...*

*Billy, bandaged but shiny, sifts through the fridge.*

*Phillip sits in the living room. He has three pictures in his hands; he's having a hard time making a decision.*

*Aura is asleep in the bedroom, the door slightly ajar.*

BILLY

I just wasn't expecting anyone-

PHILLIP

No, I'm sorry. I wasn't thinking.

BILLY

It's not a problem, really. I just don't know what we're going to eat...

PHILLIP

I just, I'm having this crisis of conscious, you know?

BILLY

Yeah, sure. Don't worry about it. I can heat up some of this... hot-dish? Aura's mother made it.

PHILLIP

Is there cheese?

BILLY

What?

PHILLIP

In the hot-dish?

BILLY

You want cheese?

PHILLIP

No-

BILLY

I've got some macaroni and cheese that the neighbor brought over. That's cheddar. It's homemade.

PHILLIP

No, that's not-

BILLY

I'm kind of in the mood for pizza, myself. We could order one. I've got beer.

PHILLIP

I can't have any dairy.

BILLY

Oh, what? Are you allergic or something?

PHILLIP

I'm not allergic-

BILLY

I've seen you eat ice cream, haven't I? And that time Aura made pasta, you drowned it in parmesan- Does it give you gas or something now?

PHILLIP

Bill-

BILLY

I developed an allergy to citrus. Makes me break out in these little fever blisters, on my tongue? Weird. Never had a problem before. Getting older just sucks. You know they make that, what is it, Lactaid, or whatever, now? For dairy and people who have problems with it. Your doctor probably knows more about it. That's not going to help tonight, though, is it... Probably can't do the pizza. Or the macaroni.

PHILLIP

I'm not allergic.

BILLY

Oh.

*Billy doesn't know what to do. He holds onto the hot-dish and the macaroni...*

BILLY (CONT'D)

Then... pepperoni and mushroom alright?

PHILLIP

I'm fasting.

BILLY

Oooh. Then... You don't want to eat at all.

PHILLIP

I can eat, I just can't have dairy.

Oh. BILLY

Or meat. PHILLIP

Okay. BILLY

Fish isn't good either. PHILLIP

Sooo... BILLY

I could have anything else. PHILLIP

What the hell kind of fast *is* this? BILLY

The Apostle's Fast. PHILLIP

Apostles don't eat? BILLY

They don't eat meat or cheese or dairy - PHILLIP

Dairy *is* cheese. BILLY

Billy, I can't have pizza. PHILLIP

*Billy nods... goes back to the kitchen.*

How's Aura? PHILLIP (CONT'D)

Oh, good, I think. They sewed it back on, but there's no guarantee it will stay, you know. I call it Frankenthumb. BILLY

I bet she hates that. PHILLIP

Despises. BILLY

But she's okay? PHILLIP

BILLY  
I think so.

*Phillip comes in with two beers, a plate of hot-dish for himself, and a bag of celery for Phil.*

BILLY (CONT'D)  
Do you want some ranch?

*Phillip sighs.*

PHILLIP  
Just look at these, will you?

BILLY  
What?

PHILLIP  
I need to make a decision.

*He hands Billy the pictures.*

BILLY  
She looks like Rose.

PHILLIP  
Who?

BILLY  
Rose, you know? From Martin Hula's class?

PHILLIP  
8th grade?

BILLY  
Yeah. She sat right behind me.

PHILLIP  
You're thinking of Debbie.

BILLY  
Who?

PHILLIP  
Debbie, she looks like Debbie. Lived next door to me.

BILLY  
No, she looks like Rose.

PHILLIP  
Her name was Debbie.

BILLY  
This girl?

PHILLIP  
In Mr. Hula's class. There's no Rose. You're thinking of Debbie.

BILLY  
I'm pretty sure her name was Rose.

*Aura buries her head under a pillow.*

PHILLIP  
Whatever. What do you *think*?

BILLY  
She's pretty.

PHILLIP  
Pretty?

BILLY  
Yeah.

PHILLIP  
Okay. What about this one?

BILLY  
Whoa!

PHILLIP  
Yeah?

BILLY  
Yeah!

PHILLIP  
That's what I thought too.

BILLY  
Kinda' reminds me of your cousin.

PHILLIP  
What?

BILLY  
Yeah! Don't you see it?

*Phillip squints, stops smiling...*

*He tears the photo in two.*

*He points to the third photo.*

PHILLIP  
So that leaves Marlana.

BILLY  
Nice!

PHILLIP  
You think?

BILLY  
I've got a thing for dimples.

PHILLIP  
You think she's fat?

BILLY  
What? No way, she's gorgeous.

PHILLIP  
I've always associated dimples with being fat.

BILLY  
You're crazy, she's great. Dimples means she laughs a lot.

PHILLIP  
I can't stop looking at her smile. You know she never had braces? Her teeth just grew like that.

BILLY  
Sounds nice.

PHILLIP  
I just wish... What do you think about her soul?

BILLY  
Man, Phil, I don't think you can tell that from a picture-

PHILLIP  
Okay, listen. Leanne is Eastern Orthodox. We agree on seemingly many levels, her father is in bonds which bodes well for solidarity, and she's only 26, which bodes well for a big family.

BILLY  
"Bodes"?

PHILLIP  
Marlana, however, she has that great bone structure and her family is well off, but she's Roman Catholic, which is just a schismatic hiccup. I've spent hours debating with myself the means by which we might reconcile our beliefs, but how can you build a life with a woman who's beliefs are so fundamentally awash in heresy...

(MORE)

PHILLIP (CONT'D)

She's completely removed from experiencing God on an intuitive level- I mean, unless I plan on spending every waking moment between today and our deathbeds, praying for her enlightenment, admission of, and consequent correction of her religious errors...

(take a breath, Phil!)

She'd have to convert.

BILLY

I thought you met these women online.

PHILLIP

I did. I mean, for crying out loud Billy, the Catholics treat us like the proverbial red headed step-child, when it is they, *they*, *THEY* who have broken the faith in false pursuits-

BILLY

Jesus, Phil, calm down!

*Phillip gives him a look at the "Jesus" use... to which Billy raises his hands in surrender.*

BILLY (CONT'D)

You're just, you're getting awfully upset here-

PHILLIP

I don't know why I even bother trying to explain things to you.

BILLY

Hey. That's not fair. I'm totally listening.

*Aura throws a pillow at the wall.*

BILLY (CONT'D)

Oh, shit.

(calling out)

Sorry Hon.

PHILLIP

(shouting)

Sorry Aura.

AURA

Close. The. Door.

*Billy gets up, peeks his head in.*

BILLY

Phil's just stopped by to check in on you.

AURA  
He's loud.

BILLY  
We'll quiet down.

*Phillip shouts from the living room.*

PHILLIP  
Good to hear you're doing better!

BILLY  
He's glad you're doing better. You need anything?

*Aura rolls over and gives Billy the stare of death.*

BILLY (CONT'D)  
Okay. I'll just be out here if you change your mind. Sorry about the... Okay.

*Billy closes the door, turning back to Phil... poor, hungry Phil with the tortured heart, eyeing his bundle of celery.*

BILLY (CONT'D)  
You sure you don't want some ranch or anything?

PHILLIP  
No thanks.

*Billy grabs himself another beer.*

BILLY  
We should probably keep it down.

PHILLIP  
Yeah. Okay. No problem. She sounds good.

BILLY  
Yeah. Yeah.  
(loooong drink)  
She is.

PHILLIP  
So, which one do you like?

BILLY  
I don't know Phil, I like 'em both fine.

PHILLIP  
That doesn't help.

BILLY

Well, what do you want me to say? I think you should go out with them a couple times, see what they're like. *In person.*

PHILLIP

I do have a lunch date planned with Marlana on Saturday.

BILLY

Great! That's perfect!

PHILLIP

I'm going to take the bus up and meet her at my uncle's restaurant.

BILLY

In New York?

PHILLIP

She lives in Brooklyn.

BILLY

WHAT?!

PHILLIP

What?

BILLY

That's a five hour bus ride!

PHILLIP

If there's traffic. Four if you leave at a good time. I'm catching the 7:15.

BILLY

We have tickets to the game-

PHILLIP

I'll be back.

BILLY

You're coming back *that night*?

PHILLIP

It would be unimaginable to expect her to put me up.

*Billy stares.*

PHILLIP (CONT'D)

Look, four and half hours there, two hours for lunch, five hours back (afternoon traffic) and you and I are in the stands. I'm just hoping that I can gain a better understanding of her opinion on the Filioque in such a brief period of time.

(MORE)

PHILLIP (CONT'D)

Mentally, I enjoy the debate of our different opinions, but I don't want to sign us up for a lifetime of mental gymnastics if we're going to get tired of one another and retreat into angry corners of unwavering inflexibility. She'd have to convert. I think she's amenable to that. I just feel bad carrying on with all three of these girls, well, two now, at the same time.

*Aura cannot stand it anymore. She gets up from the bed... she's bleary with fatigue and high on pain killers.*

*She opens the door.*

AURA

You sound like your custom ordering a goddamn pair of pants.

BILLY

Hey Hon. You're up! You hungry? There's hot-dish.

AURA

My mother's?

BILLY

Yeah, remember? She brought it by this afternoon?

AURA

I'm on drugs Billy, not senile. I was asking because I thought there might be a remote chance that you made something different. My mother puts that damn cream of mushroom soup in everything she makes. If I have to cram that down my throat on top of everything else, I'll die.

BILLY

There's mac and cheese.

*Aura looks at the celery.*

AURA

You on a diet Phil?

PHILLIP

What- oh, haha. No, I'm fasting, actually.

AURA

What a surprise.

*Aura plods into the kitchen.*

PHILLIP

She looks...

BILLY

Yeah.

AURA

Where's the beer?

BILLY

Ah, should you be drinking?

AURA

There are people walking the streets high on heroin, glue, and alleyway grain alcohol all at the same time. I think I'll survive one little beer on top of my two-hour vicodin buzz.

*She pulls a beer from the fridge, cracks it open and pulls out the mac and cheese.*

*She brings the whole pan into the living room and sits down across from Phillip.*

BILLY

Do you want me to heat that up for you?

*No, she does not, as evident from the gigantic spatula-full she just scooped into her mouth.*

*Billy sighs.*

BILLY (CONT'D)

Dora made it. Next door. Brought it by as a thank you for the cat.

AURA

(to Phillip)

We watched her cat while she was gone.

PHILLIP

That was nice of you.

AURA

Least we could do.

BILLY

She drove us to the hospital.

AURA

Man of the household faints at the first sign of blood.

BILLY

It was a bit more serious than that-

AURA

Knocked on her door, asked her to help me carry Ton-O-Bricks here to my car.

BILLY

She took one look at Aura's thumb and insisted on driving. They nearly dropped me in the rose bushes twice.

*Aura stares at him.*

BILLY (CONT'D)

What?

AURA

How are you able to relate specific story details like "almost dropped me in the rose bushes" when you were passed out cold?

BILLY

Dora filled me in on the, what happened.

AURA

When?

BILLY

When she dropped off the macaroni and cheese.

AURA

Jesus Billy, you invited her inside?

BILLY

She wanted to make sure I was, you, that we, were alright.

AURA

That nosey little cunt!

BILLY

Aura-

AURA

I'm serious, it's bad enough we got sucked into this stupid favor exchange ritual- "I'm sorry we're bleeding on your stoop, but I was wondering if you could you help me get my husband to the hospital?" -

BILLY

*-Your thumb was the emergency-*

AURA

-“Oh! Sure thing! I’ll even drive and make little passive-aggressive comments about you bleeding all over the upholstery the whole way there until you promise to pay for the cleaning- I’m *that* nice!” Then two days later it’s “Welcome home, glad to see you’ve still got a thumb, can you watch my cat?”- which guilted her into making us dinner, and now we’re obliged to invite her inside every time she comes over so she can eyeball our china cabinets and snoop on your crazy wife?!

BILLY

She’s just concerned about us.

*Aura lets out a snort.*

AURA

Bullshit. She wants to stock up on gossip. She’s got a hot-snoop-property living next door to her. We’re “Old Lady” gold.

PHILLIP

It sounds to me like your neighbor is just exhibiting some healthy Christian charity-

AURA

Oh, shut up Phil.

*Aura eyes the photos.*

AURA (CONT'D)

So which one’s the harlot?

BILLY

Honey!

AURA

I mean witch.

PHILLIP

Excuse me?

AURA

(carefully)

Which one of these ladies is the *heretic* that’s got your panties all in a bunch?

PHILLIP

She’s not a heretic, she just engages in heretical practices.

AURA

Monkey see, monkey do.

*Aura picks up the photo of Marlana.*

AURA (CONT'D)

Pretty.

PHILLIP

That's Marlana.

*She picks up the other one.*

AURA

Also pretty. They both look a bit butch though, don't you think?

PHILLIP

What?

AURA

I mean, check out those jaw lines!

BILLY

Honey, that's hardly a-

AURA

And look at those forearms. They're like miniature skyscrapers with hands... These girls work out. A lot.

PHILLIP

They are both concerned with their personal fitness, if that's what you mean.

AURA

Betty Spaghetti there could pull a tractor trailer with her teeth.

PHILLIP

It's a proven fact that women who exercise regularly are more likely to carry a baby to full term-

AURA

So these are brood mares we're looking at here?

PHILLIP

Both Marlana and Leanne are amenable to a five child household. It would be irresponsible not to take their health into consideration-

AURA

Wow. Did you hear that honey? They're *amenable*.

BILLY

Yeah, I heard.

AURA

Sounds... sexy.

PHILLIP

I understand if you don't agree with my methods, Aura, but as someone who comes from a broken home, I'd have thought you would at least appreciate-

AURA

Broken home?

PHILLIP

You'd appreciate my interest-

BILLY

-Phil-

PHILLIP

- my *interest* in avoiding any possible points of contention from the onset.

AURA

Broken HOME?

PHILLIP

Yes, Aura, Billy has told me about your parents. I'm very sorry-

AURA

I'm 30 fucking years old, you asshole. My dad left last March. I didn't *come* from a *broken home*.

PHILLIP

I can see you're still upset.

BILLY

Phil, really man, just stop talking.

AURA

I'm upset because you're talking down to me like one of your fabulous fucking priests, only I'm not a convert, PHIL. I'm a fucking star child.

BILLY

I'm sorry, I wasn't trying to sound... like that.

AURA

You march in here with your theological... *indecision*-  
 Begging my husband to help you pick out a woman, like you're some sort of cave man or broker... For fuck sakes, go out, fuck around, find a bed that fits. You don't size a woman up over her bank account and baby-bearing hips, hoping she'll change her beliefs so she can saddle up to your testes and create a half dozen spawn that look like you. Do you have any idea how irresponsible a five-children household is? Much less a batch of new religious zealots who are going to go out and make even more Phils!

(MORE)

AURA (CONT'D)

It's like a virus, a virus of belief designed to perpetuate itself until there's no more air!

BILLY

Honey, you're turning pink-

AURA

You want my advice? Go marry an *educated* woman who understands the wisdom of birth control- a woman with a brain and some fucking *eyeballs* who can actually see the world around her for what it is and not just some cloistered nursery, sound-of-music type bullshit, because the last thing this planet needs is MORE PEOPLE!

*Phillip weighs his options.*

*He picks up his pictures and stands.*

PHILLIP

I'm very sorry you're going through all this pain, Aura-

AURA

-Fuck you-

PHILLIP

-But I do wish you would stop lashing out at the people around you. I want you to know that I'm praying for you.

AURA

Awesome.

PHILLIP

Billy, thanks for the... everything.

*Billy nods.*

*Phillip leaves.*

BILLY

Thanks a lot.

AURA

He's an asshole.

BILLY

He's confused.

AURA

*Confused?!* He's treating those women like chattel.

BILLY

So now you're a feminist?

AURA

I've always been a feminist, Billy, I was *born* into it. Don't mix this up with temporary ire. These poor women go online thinking that they're avoiding the zoo, read his profile and believe they're meeting some sort of religious do-right- all the while they're being evaluated by a misogynistic Pee Wee Herman.

BILLY

What?

AURA

Phillip is gay as a jamboree. And angry about it to boot.

BILLY

He is not.

AURA

Oh come ON! He's hiding behind that... that obsession with God, wearing all this religious piety on his sleeve, "blah-blah-blah-Saints", to anyone who will listen- Meanwhile he's *dreaming* of rock-hard-cock.

BILLY

Phill's not gay! I've known him since we were kids. Jesus, he's been with more women than I could ever dream of-

AURA

And now he's a born again virgin.

BILLY

When we were in college, he literally fucked everything that wore a skirt.

AURA

Trying to fuck the gay away. He doesn't like women, Bill. You don't just go from fucking everything that moves to *not* fucking *anything* without having a major problem.

BILLY

So now everyone who's ever converted is gay?

AURA

Nooo, everyone who's converted with the kind of blind idolatry and fanaticism as Phil has, is compensating for *something*. In Phill's case, it's homosexual tendencies.

BILLY

He's just devout.

AURA

Or a sadist.

BILLY

Stop doing that. Stop minimizing his... spiritual revolution.

*Aura cracks up at that.*

AURA

Phill is a chronic obsessor. This Orthodox business is a fad, just like all the others. It is NOT a revolution.

*Billy takes his plate to the kitchen.*

BILLY

Just because we don't understand-

AURA

No, I understand perfectly. It's you who doesn't want to admit that Phillip is a very disturbed, totally confused, self loathing QUEEN. Religion is the opiate of the masses. And the addicts. And the psychotic. You mark my words. First it was eating organic, now it's the Pope. He's running from something. Three years from now Mrs. Phill is going to be sitting on this very couch crying her little eyes out, asking us if we *knew*.

Get me another beer, will you?

*Billy throws the beer at the wall over her head.*

AURA (CONT'D)

What the fuck?

BILLY

What is wrong with you?

AURA

ME? Who's the one throwing shit?

BILLY

You never stop, you never let up! You're like this perpetual... *machine* of, of misery-

AURA

I'm a ...

*Aura sputters. She throws the macaroni at him.*

AURA (CONT'D)

*How dare you!*

BILLY

Aura.

AURA

The world is going to shit. TO SHIT. And you can't feel it, so you don't understand, but don't stand there like you're not responsible!

BILLY

It's not my fault-

*Aura grabs the remote, turns on the TV. Every channel is awash with news of the BP oil spill.*

AURA

It's EVERYONE'S FAULT. Look. LOOK at this place! We are drowning, Billy. Drowning and burning, and... *burning* and *dying*. And nobody knows what to do! What kind of, of- The power that these people have mishandled? And they're still allowed to *walk among us*. They are flying on private jets while I've been unemployed for seven months, and they're killing... the... *planet!* There are birds washing up on the shore, walking into the everglades in search of safety and dying instead, because we can't find them! They're dying alone and covered in *our filth*. Look at them, look at the poison leaking... it's goddamn pandora's box, Billy. Look.

*Billy's heart squeezes in his chest for this woman...*

BILLY

Aura honey-

AURA

It's so, I mean, my God Billy. How can you say it's not your fault?

*Aura stares at the television, transfixed, tears streaming.*

*Billy brings her another beer and sits down with her to watch.*

*Dark.*

AN OPEN DOOR

*A couple days later.*

*A Census Taker knocks at the door.*

*Aura opens it.*

*She's not dressed too well - a tank top and shorts beneath a worn-out robe. Still, she's kind of sexy in that "train wreck that just got out of bed" kind of way.*

*The news is on in the living room, awash with the crisis in the Gulf.*

*The Census Taker is all business.*

STEVE

Good morning, my name's Steve Valerio, I'm with the US Census Bureau. Is this 2012 Parkview Way?

AURA

Stupid name for a street. The park is, like, three blocks away.

STEVE

Oh. Haha. Yes, I guess that is a little strange.

AURA

Why not call it Neighbor View or something. All I can see are other houses.

STEVE

Oh, I don't know, maybe there used to be fewer houses here? You could probably see farther then. Back in the day.

AURA

Huh. That's clever. You're very clever.

STEVE

Thank you. So... just to make sure then, this *is* 2012 Parkview Way?

AURA

Yup.

STEVE

Great. Do you have a few minutes to help me fill out your survey?

AURA

Didn't we do that already?

STEVE

No ma'am, looks like you didn't.

AURA

My husband's been taking care of things lately.

STEVE

Maybe he got behind. It's not a problem though. Shouldn't take more than 10 minutes...

AURA

You're a real, live, census taker?

STEVE

Yes ma'am. Got my handy dandy badge and everything.

*He smiles a little too big.*

AURA

Do you like working for the government?

STEVE

Sure. It's alright. Let me just, ah, here we go- I've got to give you this confidentiality statement-

AURA

Okay.

STEVE

I promise, this won't take long. I just need to ask you some questions here- first one is "Do you or someone else in your household live here full-time or is this a rental property?"

AURA

We live here. Let me ask you something - what does the federal government pay these days?

STEVE

Ma'am?

AURA

I imagine it isn't too impressive, but you are getting paid, right? Is it by the survey? Am I helping you fill a quota here? Or are you on the clock?

STEVE

I get paid hourly. I'd rather not say how much, it's embarrassingly low.

AURA

Ahh. In that case, you want to come in for a drink?

STEVE

Oh, thank you but, I'm really not supposed to go inside - serial killers and that kind of thing.

AURA

Do I look like a serial killer...

*She reads his badge.*

AURA (CONT'D)  
Steve?

STEVE  
No ma'am.

AURA  
My name's Aura.

STEVE  
No, Aura, you don't look like a serial killer, I was just making a joke. I just prefer to stay out here on the porch is all, stay on task.

AURA  
I get it. That's very professional of you. You have a very personable way of speaking- very clear. Do they teach you that at Census training?

STEVE  
No, that's um, probably my 15 years of teaching experience.

AURA  
You're a teacher?

STEVE  
Was.

AURA  
Press Secretary myself.

STEVE  
Laid-off?

AURA  
Fuck the government.

*Steve laughs politely, but his body language says "Get me out of here!"*

AURA (CONT'D)  
I'm sorry Steve. That wasn't very polite of me, using that kind of language. It's not even noon, for Chrissakes.

STEVE  
No ma'am, doesn't bother me at all. Now, you said it was you and your husband living here...?

AURA  
Billy. He's not home. He's still got a job. For now.

STEVE  
I hear you on that.

AURA

Do you?

*Steve stares... helpless.*

STEVE

Ma'am, I-

AURA

I told you, my name is Aura.

STEVE

Aura. Do you want me to come back later?

AURA

What? Why would you do that? I'm ready and willing to BE COUNTED. Right now. I've just extended you a polite invitation so you don't have to stand out here in the heat while you add me up.

STEVE

I can't drink, I'm working-

AURA

Nobody's going to force you to imbibe, Stephen. But it's too hot and I am too thirsty to stand out here for one more second.

*Aura walks inside, to the kitchen, turning the radio on (NPR) when she gets there.*

*She leaves the door open.*

*Steve thinks... Is this woman crazy or what? He can't just leave her door open like that, and he's already got part of the form filled in...*

*And she's got those legs...*

AURA (CONT'D)

Stephen! I have lemonade too.

*Steve peeks his head in.*

STEVE

That's very nice of you, but I don't really have time. I need to get this survey filled out and- I have quite a few more stops to make in this neighborhood.

AURA

Ever worked for the government before this?

STEVE

No.

AURA

Then let me give you a little word of advice: No one, especially not Uncle Sam, likes an over-achiever. Come in. Sit down. Have some lemonade. You can bill the Red, White, and Blue and then later you can revel your co-workers with the story of how you interviewed the nutcase on Parkview Way.

*Steve sighs, comes into the hallway.*

AURA (CONT'D)

And close the door behind you. I don't want all the cold air getting out.

*He does.*

*Then he just... stands there.*

BILLY

You have a beautiful house.

*Aura smiles, ice cubes clanking.*

AURA

Thank you. My husband hired a decorator when we moved in. She did an alright job. Kind of snooty. You can have a seat in the kitchen, you know. My husband hid all the knives.

*He comes into the kitchen.*

*Steve notices her bandaged hand, looks at the door. Was this a good idea?*

AURA (CONT'D)

Hunting accident. You sure you don't want something stronger?

*Aura has two glasses of lemonade on the counter and a bottle of Vodka.*

STEVE

No, thank you.

*She adds a healthy splash of vodka to hers.*

AURA

I'm afraid you'll have to carry your own glass, this thumb isn't working yet.

*He smiles and fetches the drink.*

*Aura toasts him, he takes a sip.  
Aura watches.*

STEVE

Mmmm.

AURA

So, Stephen, what's the next question?

STEVE

It's Esteban, actually.

AURA

Oh. I'm so sorry.

STEVE

No, it's no big deal, you just keep calling me Stephen is all-

AURA

Of course it's a big deal, it's your name.

STEVE

No really. Don't worry about it. It's fine. Just call me Steve, okay?

AURA

Of course.

*Steve takes another sip.*

STEVE

So, I've got your name and you said your husband's name was Billy... Is that short for anything-

AURA

Why didn't you correct me before?

STEVE

What? Oh, I don't know. I guess I was being polite.

AURA

Well, you shouldn't be. I'd rather be correct.

STEVE

Okay.

AURA

William.

STEVE

Uh...

AURA  
Billy is short for William.

STEVE  
Oh. Okay. Great.  
(he writes)  
Then, if you could just take a look at the list I gave you-

AURA  
I left it on the counter.

STEVE  
Oh. Do you want me to get it for you?

AURA  
Why would you do that?

STEVE  
Well, I'm... I mean, so you could look at it.

AURA  
You don't need to wait on me, Esteban.

*Beat.*

*Beat.*

*What the fuck?*

STEVE  
Why don't I, I'll just give you another one. They give us a ton of these things.

*He roots around in his bag; it is uncomfortably close to her legs.*

*It might be so close that eventually he has to move it from near her naked calves and into his lap... like a shield.*

AURA  
What did you teach?

STEVE  
History.

AURA  
Ahhh, yes, I can imagine that.

STEVE  
You can?

AURA

Yes. You feel very rooted to me, in this place. Land of the free, and all that. You understand it, obviously.

STEVE

Oh, I wouldn't... well, thanks.

AURA

You're welcome.

*Steve laughs... nervously...*

STEVE

Now, if I could just find... the... uh...

AURA

So, tell me, professor, if history is bound to repeat itself, what do you make of our recent turn of events?

STEVE

What do you mean?

AURA

Are we locked into a self destructing cycle of unimaginable devastation or is this, economic-ecological-psycho-bad-meltdown just an... aberration?

STEVE

I don't really know.

AURA

You must have an opinion.

STEVE

I wasn't that kind of historian.

AURA

But you're an observer.

*Finally! He pulls out the form.*

STEVE

Ah, here we go!

*Aura looks at him, waiting...*

STEVE (CONT'D)

Oh, well... I think people are... inclined towards destruction. Unfortunately. But that's just a, my personal, feeling.

AURA

Ah-ha. I thought so. A realist.

*Steve is stymied; This woman's stare is intense!*

*He comes back to himself and points to the information sheet.*

STEVE

So, looking at column A, can you tell me if anyone else was living here on April 1st.

AURA

Are you asking me if I have children?

STEVE

Well, that's one of the options, yes. But, we, *they* want to know about, well *anyone* on the list, you know? Children, adults, they don't have to be related to you. But if they lived here...

AURA

You're Spanish, no?

STEVE

I'm Mexican-American. And some other things.

AURA

Other?

STEVE

My mom was French-Canadian-

*Aura practically claps with glee.*

AURA

Ah! So your parents met in the middle and created their own little slice of America. That's beautiful.

STEVE

Sure.

AURA

Do you speak Spanish?

STEVE

Yes.

AURA

I studied Spanish for three years in college.

STEVE

Oh, that's great.

AURA

Never managed French though... at least not the honest kind.

STEVE

Well, it can be a difficult language.

AURA

How does it feel to be working for a government body that treats one of your places of origin like a naive little twit and the other like a fucking toilet?

STEVE

Ma'am-

AURA

I just ask, because you're already identifying with "The Man." Didn't the Census thing just start? You couldn't have been working with them for very long...

STEVE

Excuse me?

AURA

Just a moment ago, when you were asking me about other people living here, you said "We want to know"-

STEVE

No I didn't.

AURA

Yes, you did. You corrected yourself immediately afterwards though, distancing yourself with a "They" which tells me that you've not been completely assimilated, yet. But the point is - you still said it.

STEVE

I think I should come back later. When your husband is home.

AURA

Sientate' Esteban, por favor.

*Steve can think of better things to do with that chair than sit in it.*

*He steps towards the door.*

STEVE

Thank you for the lemonade.

AURA

You should have tried the vodka.

*He suddenly turns around.*

STEVE

I'm working here. I'm doing a job, okay? I get that you're going through something, obviously, yeah?

(MORE)

STEVE (CONT'D)

But you don't talk to people like that, you don't talk down to people who are just trying to do their job. I'm not a pool boy, and I don't appreciate you talking at me like I am one. And get dressed, for the love of Christ. It's too late to be sitting around in your pajamas drinking all day.

*Aura cracks up.*

AURA

Should I have gotten started earlier?

*Steve shakes his head- this lady's out of her mind! He steps towards the door.*

*Aura tries to collect herself.*

AURA (CONT'D)

Wait. Wait. Steve, I'm sorry. Please. I'm not usually... like this.

(catching her breath)

I just, I mean, here I am sitting around in my pajamas all day and then you show up all bright and shiny. And well-packaged. You look like... like... a brand new happy penny, and I look like- I'm sorry. I've had a lot of vodka.

You were right to tell me off like that. And I bet it felt good, didn't it? Look, come back, I'll answer all your questions. I promise.

*He narrows his eyes...*

AURA (CONT'D)

Scouts honor. Or, whatever.

*Steve eyes her hand.*

STEVE

What'd you do to your hand? Really?

AURA

I was trying to kill a cricket.

STEVE

A what? Why?

AURA

I couldn't sleep. Funny thing though, when I finally found him, I couldn't do it. I just... there he was in the center of my floor - all around him a vast concrete desert. But he wouldn't shut up. I had the knife... My brain just got scrambled I think. It was an accident.

STEVE

You're not a, some kind of lemonade-killer-lady?

AURA

No.

*He thinks.*

*He should probably leave, but...*

*Steve pulls out his clipboard.*

STEVE

What's your last name?

AURA

Bloom.

STEVE

And Billy's?

AURA

Bloom.

STEVE

And was there anyone else living here on April fir-

AURA

No, just us.

STEVE

I have to ask if you're male or female.

*Aura smiles.*

AURA

Ah, what government genius.

*Steve sighs.*

AURA (CONT'D)

I'm female, most of the time, but sometimes I feel wolverine. I shirk my wifely duties, even though I'm unemployed, so my husband keeps the maid. I think that's relevant to my status as the fairer sex, a woman who needs another woman to wash her floors is some kind of something else, isn't she? And my husband is male, most days, but twice on Sunday. Sports.

*Steve, against his better judgement, sits back down at the table.*

STEVE

When's the last time you got out of this house?

AURA

You mean besides the hospital run?

STEVE

Yeah.

AURA

I don't know. The world seems a bit... scary, right now.

STEVE

I got laid off last fall. It was hard. But Aura, rule number one of unemployment is you've got to get out of your pajamas.

*Aura toasts that little nugget.*

AURA

Clever, clever, Steve. I like that.

AURA (CONT'D)

I suppose I have gotten a bit... lazy. But you know, I had a recruiter tell me last week - month - whenever the fuck- that they're not even looking at resumes from the currently unemployed anymore. There are too many of us to weed through. They want to hire people who haven't lost their jobs because they assume those people are *lower risk*. Now THAT's lazy. The more people get laid off, the more money the rich get to keep to themselves. You'd think there would be some kind of fucking solidarity between humans, or Americans at least- bunch of goddamn cowboys all over the place- but no. It's "look out for number one-and-only." It's a goddamn class war. They're going to starve us out.

STEVE

Right.

*He looks around... That's some kind of class war if this household is at the bottom.*

AURA

You're forming an objection.

STEVE

Well, you must still be doing alright, in this "war" you're talking about if you've managed to keep this house, and the maid, in spite of things. There are other people out there living in their cars-

AURA

Yes. My husband is doing amazing. He's one of *them*.

STEVE

Okay. But the point is, you're not starving.

AURA

Then why do I feel so damn hungry?

*She leans in to Steve... eyeball to eyeball... Or as close as they could be without it looking ridiculous.*

*Steve is a bit hypnotized, in spite of himself.*

STEVE

I suppose it's because you don't like sitting still. It can be, a person can feel pretty empty when they're not, when they don't feel like they're going anywhere, or contributing...

AURA

See, Esteban. I knew we were going to be friends.

*A moment in which Steve knows that Aura knows that he's not leaving anytime soon.*

AURA (CONT'D)

You want to ask me another question?

STEVE

Yes. Umm, looking at the definition in column C, would you identify yourself as being of Mexican American origin?

AURA

I'm a bit irrational for that distinction, don't you think.

STEVE

Well then, looking at Column D, can you please select a race?

AURA

How about a 10K.

STEVE

Ma'am?

AURA

I'm in the mood for a marathon.

STEVE

Oh.

AURA

You sure you don't want a drink Steve?

STEVE

I haven't finished my survey yet-

AURA

I can see that.

*Gulp.*

STEVE

What do you want from me?

AURA

I think the world is ending. And I'd like you to help me forget about it.

STEVE

Oh. Is that all.

AURA

How attached are you to that clipboard?

STEVE

This, I... not very, I mean it's just a clipboard-

*And before he can finish his thought Aura has her mouth on his.**It unusual for Steve to have women throw themselves at him, and he reacts like a thirsty man to a spring...**...Even if she is a train wreck...**Even if she does taste like vodka and sleep.**Aura tries to bury herself in Steve, but the world around her is ever present, vibrating on the horizon...**The t.v.**The radio.**The newspaper on the table...*

AURA

Come on.

STEVE

Where are we going?

AURA

Where do you think?

*Aura leaves her robe behind and leads Steve to the bedroom.*

AURA (CONT'D)  
How much do you get paid an hour?

STEVE  
Fifteen big ones.

AURA  
Then we're going to have to make this worth their while.

*They move from the hall to the vanity, to the floor and the bed...*

*Still, the world presses in on Aura; Newscasters leering, activists crying - the world is screaming out for attention!*

*Aura presses closer to Steve, eating him alive.*

AURA (CONT'D)  
Make it stop, make it stop, make it stop, stop, stop!

*And finally a great light glows around and behind her as they climax - a bright blinding goddamn light - Steve frozen in time, the world still for one moment of divine orgasmic clarity...*

AURA (CONT'D)  
EGO sum fieri!

*Frozen...*

*Frozen...*

*BLACK.*

ILLUMINATION

*Later that night.*

*The house is dark except for the light coming from the computer.*

*Aura sits on the couch, laptop in front of her, hair tucked, clothes actually neat. Various print-outs are stacked next to her.*

*She chews her lip feverishly as she  
Googles.*

*Billy comes home. He's got a heavy  
briefcase and a ravenous belly.*

Aura? BILLY

In here. AURA

The house is pitch black. BILLY

It's eight thirty. AURA

*Billy raises his eyebrows in  
surrender and turns on the light.*

I don't suppose you made dinner? BILLY

There's a plate in the oven. I got hungry already and ate. AURA

You actually *made dinner*? You cooked? BILLY

Yeah. AURA

*Billy raises his eyebrows... this  
is new.*

*He heads to the kitchen. Sure  
enough, there's a plate in the  
oven, tin foiled to keep it from  
drying out.*

*Wow.*

Thanks. BILLY

You're welcome. AURA

*Billy gets out a beer, and washes  
his hands.*

What are you working on over there? BILLY

AURA  
Research. It's been an enlightening day.

BILLY  
Oh?

AURA  
A census taker came by today.

BILLY  
Shit. I totally forgot to mail that thing in.

AURA  
Its okay. The fewer forms get mailed in, the more people get paid to go knock on doors.

*Billy sits down with his plate.*

BILLY  
Enchiladas?

AURA  
I was inspired.

BILLY  
This sauce is perfect.

AURA  
I'm glad you approve.

BILLY  
Not too spicy at all.

AURA  
There's leftovers in the fridge.

BILLY  
These will be great heated up.

*Aura tears her eyes from the computer.*

AURA  
Billy, have I been unbearable?

BILLY  
What?

AURA  
To live with. These past few months.

*Billy puts his plate down. How to answer...*

BILLY

You've been going through a lot-

AURA

Everything has been totally fucked.

BILLY

I know.

AURA

And then I went and stabbed you-

BILLY

Scars are sexy.

AURA

I wanted... I'm sorry.

BILLY

Oh. Well, you don't have to, I mean, thanks. I understand.

AURA

You do?

BILLY

Well, I know you've been in pain. I've tried to understand that part, that you're hurting.

AURA

I feel... better.

BILLY

You do?

AURA

It's been... I don't know how to explain it- Just this overwhelming feeling of impotence. Like I was in the middle of a room disintegrating and I'm the only one who can see all the pieces falling down around us, but I have no idea how to make it stop.

BILLY

Yeah...

AURA

I- the news, it's just all bad. All the time. I guess I've had a lot of time to just see it for what it is, you know? I haven't had any distractions.

BILLY

Like work.

AURA

Exactly. Nothing to take my mind off the fucked-up-ness. I'm sorry if it's made me difficult to be around.

BILLY

Aura, honey, I love you. So much. I know this has been, you've been going through some really... exploring a lot of hurt and... stuff. I'm just, I've just felt like you wouldn't let me in, you know? Like you were determined to be there alone. But I'm here for you. I am totally and completely here for you.

AURA

Things are going to change Billy.

BILLY

Yeah?

AURA

I can feel it. It's like the wind has shifted and blown away the clouds.

BILLY

Good. That's good. I'm so glad.

AURA

I'm working on a new project.

BILLY

Great!

AURA

I don't really understand it all yet, but it's... I think it's major.

BILLY

Is this something, a freelance assignment, or for your resume or something?

AURA

No. Bigger than that. I'm not going back to work.

BILLY

Oh.

AURA

I'm sorry, I know it's not fair to make you shoulder all the finances. I can call my dad-

BILLY

No. We're fine without his help. I make more than enough. We'll be fine until-

AURA  
I'm going to have a baby.

BILLY  
What?

AURA  
That's the project, Billy.

BILLY  
But I thought... You don't want kids. You've never wanted kids- politically or... what?

AURA  
I know. I know it's confusing. I'm not being clear. It's not for us, Billy, it's for the bigger picture.

BILLY  
Aura, you can't be pregnant. We haven't, for months -

*Aura kisses him.*

*Billy hasn't felt his wife's attentions for a long time.*

*It is sweet.*

AURA  
Do you trust me Billy?

BILLY  
Yeah. Of course.

AURA  
I love you.

BILLY  
Aura...

*Billy's mind may have concerns, but those three little words are all his arms...*

*...and mouth...*

*...and soul...*

*needed to hear.*

*BLACK*

## THE MORNING AFTER

*Billy wakes up the on the couch.  
Their clothes are scattered on the  
floor.*

*The shower is on - presumably Aura  
is scrubbing herself off.*

*Billy sits up, with a dizzy grin.*

*He makes his way to the kitchen,  
turns on the coffee pot, stops and  
chuckles at himself; he was  
whistling!*

*The shower turns off.*

*He looks outside. The sun is  
shining...*

BILLY

God, it's beautiful outside! Maybe we can go to the farmer's market today, get some goodies.

*He walks into the living room and  
sorts through the pile of clothes,  
pulls on his pants...*

BILLY (CONT'D)

We could do chocolate dipped strawberries tonight. Make a deal out of it.

*His clothes are tangled with Aura's  
printouts...*

BILLY (CONT'D)

I think you're stuff got a little smashed. Hope it wasn't too... Honey? Is this what you were working on yesterday?

*He frowns... mental firecrackers  
smouldering in his sleepy, sexed up  
brain.*

*Aura comes out of the bedroom in  
her robe, toweling her damp hair.*

AURA

Do I smell coffee?

BILLY

Yeah. Is this... Why are you studying Latin?

AURA

Oh. I had this moment yesterday, this incredible amazing moment, just, out of the blue, I spoke Latin.

BILLY

What?

AURA

Yeah! It was totally bizarre.

BILLY

I didn't know you spoke-

AURA

I don't. That's why it was so amazing. I spent the whole day trying to figure out what it meant. Did you say something about strawberries?

BILLY

I thought we might go to the Farmer's Market and get some.

AURA

Oh. That sounds nice.

BILLY

There's stuff in here about... This all looks like more Latin and - are we building a greenhouse?

AURA

There were lots of tangents, I just printed out everything that seemed related. I haven't begun to sort it out yet.

*Billy sits down.*

AURA (CONT'D)

If we're going to the Farmer's Market we should stop off for some sunscreen. I haven't been outside in God knows how long. I'll probably fry.

BILLY

Aura, honey, this is... it's so scattered.

AURA

I told you I haven't got it organized.

BILLY

No. Like, out of my field of experience here, this is... this is something- It's not... *sensible*.

AURA

Everything can be organized Billy. What's wrong with you?

BILLY

Aura, honey, I think, I think it's time we talk about getting you some medication.

AURA

I'm not crazy.

BILLY

I didn't say that.

AURA

Billy, I've never been clearer in my life.

BILLY

I know. I can see it in your face! That beautiful, clear, face. That's why I think we should talk about this now, because you *can* have a conversation about it. *Because* you're so clear.

AURA

You think I'm... this isn't manic. Maybe before I was depressed, but I'm not manic. I'm fine! It was situational. This is not a psychosis.

BILLY

Aura, listen to yourself. You go up and down, you get violently angry, and then you hate yourself. You're so clear and focused right now, but last night you were printing out pages and pages of unrelated... I mean, this looks like blueprints for a water filtration system and here you're researching hydroponic tomatoes- It's just stacks and stacks of... I'm scared, baby, I'm really scared. This is not normal.

*Aura sighs.*

AURA

I'm sorry. I don't know how to make you understand. But I am not going back to that dark mental place. It's finished. Done. You don't have to worry! I told you Billy, I'm going to have a baby. Things are different now.

BILLY

How can you possibly think that you're pregnant?

AURA

I can feel it.

BILLY

Aura-

AURA

I felt it the moment it happened. A seed of utter possibility collided with one of my cynical eggs and exploded with unrelenting force. I am a vessel for that force. I am filled with purpose- with meaning! The reason I was laid off, my parents, the cricket... all of it was steering me here. To this place. I've been given a great responsibility, and I gladly accept. All that is left is to prepare for its coming and enjoy the time we have together before.

BILLY

Aura, even if we made a baby last night, you wouldn't be able to feel it.

AURA

Not "we" Billy.

BILLY

What?

AURA

I wish it had been you. I don't know why it wasn't.

BILLY

Aura...

AURA

Please don't look at me like that. It's so much more complicated than "loyalty" and "vows" - it's not, it wasn't a choice, but the force of the universe pushing me towards an inevitable outcome. I was steered towards the edge of absolute despair for *this exact purpose*, just as he was steered to my doorstep- fired, tried, and finally, *desperately*, funneled into the census pool- so he could knock at my door and sacrifice himself for this greater good - the greater good in which we now find ourselves the primary players.

BILLY

Aura, you're not making sense. I want you to get dressed and I'm going to take you to the hospital. There is something wrong with you-

AURA

Okay. But you won't have to take me anywhere.

BILLY

Aura-

AURA

The police are getting ready to knock on the door. They'll be taking us both in with them.

BILLY

Police? What on earth are you taking about?

AURA

The dead census taker in the bedroom, Billy. His name is Esteban. He told me to call him Steve.

*Knock, knock, knock.*

*Billy.*

*Aura.*

*BLACK*

ACT BREAK